



Service Coordination In FY 09

Central Office began a conversation with stakeholders in Kentucky about service coordination almost a year ago, meeting with Point of Entry (POE) administrative staff, service coordinators and a state stakeholder group in January, 2007. We approached those groups with a series of concerns regarding the current structure of service coordination in Kentucky, including:

- An inability of Central Office to assure the coordination of early intervention services in a timely manner, as indicated by a compliance rate of 79% in FY06 (as reported in the APR which you can locate on the First Steps Web-site);
- An inability of Central Office to assure the timely and effective transition of children from Part C to Part B at age 3, as indicated by the fact that 92% of children who were potentially eligible for Part B services were documented as having a Transition Conference in FY06; [Of further concern is that more recent targeted monitoring has found that only 75% of IFSPs for children who turned 3 in FY07 contained Transition steps and services as required by federal regulation.]

- An inability of Central Office to assure timely and appropriate service coordination services, as indicated by the number of children who were dropped by PSCs without being linked to another service coordinator; and

- The disruption experienced by families when transitioning from initial to primary service coordination resulting in a lack of continuity in service coordination care.

A workgroup of the System Design Team was asked to investigate models of service coordination and provide Central Office with feedback regarding the proposal to merge initial and primary service coordination as well as recommendations according to research-based practice.

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Acting Secretary of CHFS Named



On Wednesday the CHFS Office of Communications forwarded the following message:

Governor Steve Beshear has appointed his general counsel, Ellen Hesen, as acting secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS). She will serve as acting secretary of the Cabinet until a permanent secretary is named.

A lawyer for 20 years, Hesen has previous state government experience, including several years of service in the former Cabinet for Health Services (CHS). From 1996 to 2003, she served in various positions in state government, including general counsel to CHS, interim commissioner for the Department for Medicaid Services and deputy secretary and acting secretary of CHS.

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In April 2007 that workgroup came back to Central Office with a recommendation to implement a “blended with entry” model of service coordination, which would use dedicated service coordinators under the administrative oversight of the POE. The workgroup also included a recommendation to combine the roles of Initial Service Coordinator and Primary Service Coordinator.

Feeling confident that the direction we were moving in was supported by research and practice, we began working to determine the feasibility of carrying out such a system change. We contacted Bonnie Thorsen Young at Seven Counties and asked if she would chair a workgroup that could look at maximizing our existing service coordination workforce, hiring flexibility at the POE and recommended caseloads and we began examining the FY09 program budget

(to the best of our ability so early in the fiscal year).

Ms. Thorsen-Young’s workgroup concluded their work in mid-November and provided Central Office with several recommendations, including:

- Meet with each Point of Entry office to describe the redesign and its purpose and solicit buy-in from POEs to expand staffing through the employment of existing PSCs – and the workgroup highlighted several flexible employment options, including variable hour employment, PRN employment and contractual employment; and
- Adequately fund, staff and train the structure. This was actually a series of recommendations, including a recommendation to maintain a caseload of 35:1.

As soon as Central Office received these recommendations we began meeting 2 and 3 times weekly with Division Administration and Budget

personnel in order to determine whether the FY09 budget could support this system change and after – what feels like – absolutely exhaustive scrutiny, we’ve determined that it cannot. With the administrative changes going on and the budget less than firm, there are too many uncertainties to be able to make a system change of this magnitude. We cannot adequately fund a system that would support reasonable service coordination caseloads across the state – and that, for us, was non-negotiable. I want to be clear, however, that Central Office remains steadily committed to working toward a “blended with entry” model of service coordination in which initial and primary service coordinator roles are blended under the administrative oversight of the Point of Entry. To that end we will use FY09 as a transition and planning year and

will begin to focus service coordination training on the combined ISC/PSC role so that primary service coordinators will be better prepared to take on ISC responsibilities and vice versa. We should have more solid budget information by March, which should give us a good amount of time to plan for FY10. All of this said, we cannot ignore the issues that were driving us in this direction in the first place. Though we will not be moving primary service coordination under the administrative oversight of the POEs this coming fiscal year, we must address the areas of non-compliance that PSCs most directly impact.

One of the areas we will be looking at most closely through data is the area of Transition – and we are not alone in this. KDE is also under significant scrutiny by OSEP to improve their performance in the area of Transition and will be working collaboratively with us. And finally, we will be reviewing and modifying the PSC provider agreements for FY09 to reflect performance standards and we will expect performance to meet or exceed set standards. Things that we will definitely be looking at are:

- Do IFSPs contain Transition steps and services?
- Are transition conferences being held ... when are they being held ... and if not, why?
- Are transition conferences and ARC meetings taking place on the same day? How often and why?

In closing, I want to thank the workgroups that were convened for the tremendous effort they put toward progressing this activity. That work will be used as we continue planning for FY10.